



**TOURISM IS A BURGEONING INDUSTRY IN CHINA MAKING IT NOT ONLY A PRIME BUSINESS DESTINATION BUT A MUST SEE TRAVEL STOP. TO ENSURE THAT YOU ENJOY YOUR TRIP, CHINESE TRANSLATION PRO HAS COMPILED THESE HANDY TRAVEL TIPS AS WELL AS USEFUL BITS OF INFORMATION TO TAKE WITH YOU.**

August and November are perhaps the best travel months with respect to price, weather and entertainment.

**GETTING THERE:** The national airline is Air China. As is true of any flight, travelers should confirm their return flight reservations; airline overbooking has led to people being stranded in China. Also, be prepared for a lengthy flight. A nonstop from New York to Beijing lasts 14 hours while a charter to Shanghai lasts upwards of 18 hours.

There are four airport hubs within China; Beijing/Peking (BJS/PEK), Guangzhou Baiyun International, Shanghai Hongqiao (SHA) and Shanghai

throughout China. The trains are affordable, safe and well maintained operating between major cities; services include Beijing to Guangzhou, Shanghai, Harbin, Chengdu and Urumqi. There are three types of trains, the Express option being the best of the three. There are four varieties of fare: hard seat, soft seat (only on short-distance trains such as the Hong Kong to Guangzhou (Canton) line), hard sleeper and soft sleeper. Children under 3 ft tall travel free and those under 4ft pay a quarter of the fare. Train travel is often a comfortable experience albeit, a time consuming one, due to the distance between destinations. Domestic plane travel is a time saving

# Be an Informed Traveler not a Novice Tourist!

## Chinese Translation Pro's Guide to Having a Safe, Memorable Trip to China

**KNOW YOUR CURRENCY:** Renminbi is the currency in the mainland of the People's Republic of China. One US Dollar converts to nearly eight Renminbi, great news for American tourists looking for bang for the buck. Hong Kong, Macao and the Republic of China have their own, distinct currencies.

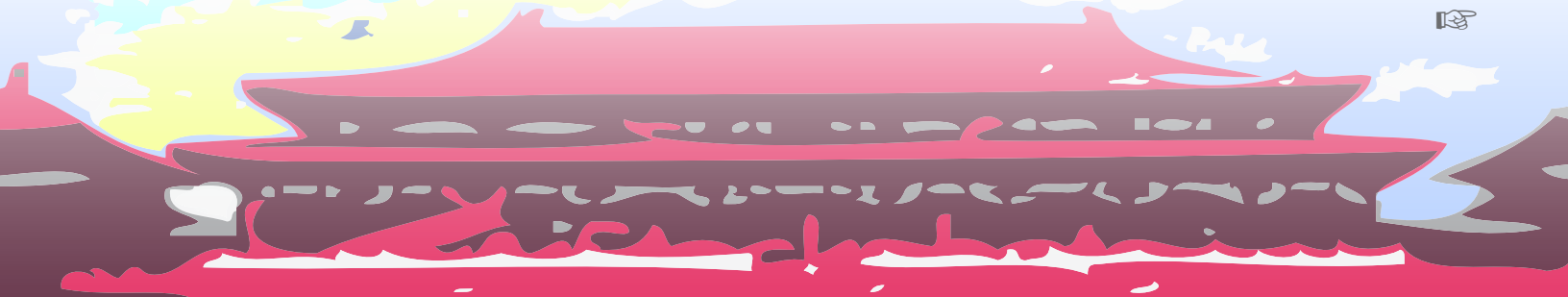
**WHEN TO GO:** If you looking for the lowest price on travel, plan your trip during the Low Season; December, January and February. The Peak Travel Season pertains to May, September and October. March, April, June, July,

Pudong (PVG). Each airport includes taxis, public and shuttle buses, duty free shops, banks/currency conversions, post offices, business and internet facilities and bars and restaurants. Important to note is the departure tax, which is paid in Chinese currency only. Children under 12 and transit passengers, proceeding within 24 hours of travel, are exempt.

**ONCE THERE:** Once in China, there are several transportation options via rail, sea and automobile. Railways provide the principal means of transportation

alternative. Flights from Shanghai to Beijing, Hong Kong to Shanghai and Guangzhou to Shanghai are approximately 2 hours; however, the round-trip travel costs average \$350 USD. Though express train travel between these cities ranges from 12 to 18 hours, the prices are decidedly more affordable, between \$15 to \$30 USD.

For travel on roadways, travelers should air on the side of caution. Roads are not of the highest quality. China remains an agricultural nation at heart lacking the mechani-



cal expertise or services found in the West. For travel of great distances, this can prove problematic. Traffic drives on the right. Bus services operate between the main cities. Buses are normally crowded, but are able to reach places that trains can not. For your comfort, there are luxury bus options for a higher cost. If you opt to drive, most rental companies require retaining the driver's passport making driving yourself next to impossible. Visitors often hire a driver. Drivers can be hired on a daily or weekly basis.

Taxis are available in large cities from most hotels and shopping districts. They are government regulated and are a very reliable, affordable form of transportation. Still, if the taxi you select does not have a running meter, it is wise to agree to a fare before instructing the driver further. Visitors should either write or have someone write the destination in Chinese characters in case the driver does not speak English. That said drivers in major metropolitan areas often speak Basic English. A taxi can be hailed or scheduled at any time during the day. If you are staying in a less populated area of China, bicycling is a good transportation option.

**VISA- DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT:** Visas for leisure travel to China are easy to obtain, granting a one month's stay. The Chinese embassy or consulate, your travel agent or an independent visa service will gladly assist you. In the United States, contact the Chinese

Embassy in Washington DC or the Consulates in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston or New York. US citizens can stay in Hong Kong without a visa for up to 30 days.

**A HEALTHY TRAVELER IS A HAPPY TRAVELER:** Travelers should check with their doctors before visiting China. A Health Declaration Form must be completed upon arrival. You should also bring necessary prescribed and over the counter medications with you since there is no guarantee you will find them in China. Travel to high-altitude areas like Tibet is not recommended for people with pulmonary or heart problems. Please note that the health quarantine service reserves the right to prevent anyone diagnosed with AIDS, venereal disease, leprosy, mental illness, or active tuberculosis from entering China.

**DON'T DRINK THE WATER:** Tap water is not drinkable except in select hotels. Bottled water, which costs no more than \$1, is recommended.

**TIPS ON TIPPING:** Tipping is widely accepted and encouraged by tour guides, hotel staff and car services. In restaurants, if the tip has not already been figured into the bill, a 10 to 15 percent tip is advisable.

**HOME SICKNESS:** You can phone home from your hotel room but be prepared for the expense. You will pay at least \$3 a minute for a call to the States. As an alternative, be on the lookout for

international phone cards. They offer competitive rates at prices markedly lower than the regular per minute cost. Also, you can have family and friends call you though they may not like fitting the bill. The convenience and cost effectiveness of using email is your best communication bet.

**GOOD EATS:** A meal in China need not include won ton or dim sum to be considered delicious and authentic. China offers a vast array of dining options including Muslim, Korean, American and traditional Chinese. Americans should leave their preconceptions of Chinese food at the customs gate!

**MAKING NOTES MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE:** Getting around in any foreign country can be intimidating, especially if there is a definite language barrier to complicate communication. To alleviate future frustration we have come up with some common questions and phrases for you to print out and take with you. You can download it for Free from our website: [www.chinesetranslationpro.com](http://www.chinesetranslationpro.com). ■

